



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: EA 05-004
Prompted By: RQ 04-011
Date Opened: 02/17/2005
Principal Investigator: Peter Ong
Subject: Front Seat Belt Buckle Assembly

Manufacturer: Ford Motor Company
Products: MY 2001 Ford Lt Trucks, SUVs, Minivans and Large Pass. Cars
Population: 997,263

Problem Description: Allegation of buckle failure after passing original recall inspection.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	12	530	542
Crashes/Fires:	3	7	10
Injury Incidents:	2	7	9
# Injuries:	2	7	9
Fatality Incidents:	1	0	1
# Fatalities:	1	0	1
Other*:	0	10,282	10,282

*Description Of Other: Warranty claims of buckle replacement after passing the original recall inspection service.

Action: Open an Engineering Analysis.

Engineer: Peter C. Ong

Date: 02/17/2005

Div. Chief: Thomas Z. Cooper Tzu

Date: 02/17/2005

Office Dir.: Kathleen C. DeMeter

Date: 02/17/2005

Summary: Under recall campaign (01V227), Ford recalled approximately 1.3 million vehicles to inspect and if necessary replace the front driver and/or passenger seat belt buckle. Approximately 1.1 million owners responded by taking their vehicles to a dealer for inspection of the buckle using a specialized buckle test tool. Ford reported that 829,927 vehicles had both buckles pass the tool test and another 167,336 vehicles had one buckle pass. ODI and Ford received complaints alleging seat belt buckle failure shortly after passing the original recall inspection service. Complainants alleged that the buckle failed by either not latching or false-latching (partial engagement of the latch to the latch plate). A false-latched buckle may release with minor movement or impact against the buckle housing including inadvertent release while the vehicle is in motion.

ODI is opening this Engineering Analysis to further analyze the field performance of those vehicles that Ford dealers passed (one or both buckles) using Ford's recall inspection test (997,263 vehicles).

Tzu
2-18-05